

VZCZCXRO2366

OO RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBC RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHDF RUEHDIR RUEHFL
RUEHIK RUEHKUK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHLN RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR
RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHFR #3579/01 2401813
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 281813Z AUG 07
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9751
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 PARIS 003579

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT ALSO FOR EUR/WE, INR/EUC, EUR/ERA, EUR/PPD
SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PUNCTUATION TYPOS)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL PHUM PINR FR](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SARKOZY'S AUGUST 27 FOREIGN POLICY
SPEECH -- HIGHLIGHTS AND MEDIA REACTION

REF: A. 8/27 PARIS POINTS "SPECIAL EDITION" B. 8/28
PARIS POINTS

PARIS 00003579 001.2 OF 006

11. (SBU) Summary and Comment: On August 27 French President Nicolas Sarkozy delivered a major foreign policy address in Paris to the annual French Chief of Missions Conference. He identified the building of Europe as "the absolute priority of France's foreign policy," and cited Iran as the "most serious crisis facing the international order today." He stated that an Iran equipped with nuclear weapons was "unacceptable," called for "increasing sanctions, but also an opening up toward Iran should it opt to comply with its obligations." The objective is to "enable us to escape a catastrophic alternative: the Iranian bomb or the bombing of Iran." Sarkozy highlighted the importance of the French-U.S. friendship ("as vital as ever"), while still offering his now standard caveat that alliance does not equate with alignment of views, and friends must share their disagreements "without taboos." He emphasized the need to strengthen European defense, but not in competition with NATO: "We need both." He called for a new "European security strategy" to be drawn up during France's 2008 EU Presidency. His speech included disapproval of the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq, along with a statement of French readiness to play a role in seeking a political solution. Sarkozy depicted a timetable for troop withdrawal as a trigger for responsible action by all parties, first and foremost Iraqis, in the region.

12. (SBU) Sarkozy had harsh words to say about Russia (asserting itself with a certain "brutality") and China ("transforming its insatiable quest for raw materials into a strategy for control, particularly in Africa"). On Turkey, he agreed to open those chapters compatible with both EU membership and association, on the condition that the EU create, by the end of the year, a committee to address its future ("What Europe in 2020-30, and for what missions?"). Sarkozy pronounced himself in favor of increasing NATO's efforts in Afghanistan, including reinforced French training of the Afghan army; re-stated his friendship for Israel, while calling for reinforcement of the Palestinian Authority under Mahmoud Abbas; and, advocated finding a way for Muslim countries to gain access to nuclear-generated electricity. Finally, Sarkozy identified three broad challenges facing the international community: How to prevent a confrontation between Islam and the West; how to integrate into a new global order of

the emergent global giants, China, India and Brazil; and how to deal with major global risks such as climate change, pandemics, and energy security.

¶3. (SBU) Summary Ct'd: Media analysis, both domestically and abroad, focused on Sarkozy's comments on Iran and Turkey. Sarkozy's blunt comment on the twin catastrophes of a nuclear-armed Iran or an international attack against Iran was widely interpreted as stepped-up rhetoric. Sarkozy's conciliatory statement that France would not block enlarged dialogue between Turkey and the European Commission on membership also attracted media notice, but Sarkozy also restated his conviction that Turkey and the EU must devise a partnership other than full membership. End Summary.

¶4. (U) This cable re-transmits post's initial reporting on the speech (see Embassy Paris SIPRnet reports for August 27, 2007, Ref A), along with the media reaction in the hours following the speech.

SARKOZY EXTOLS IMPORTANCE FOR THE FUTURE OF U.S.-FRANCE ALLIANCE

¶5. (SBU) A confident President Sarkozy, in an hour-long address at France's annual Chief of Missions Conference, mapped out the direction for France's foreign policy during his first term as president. Sarkozy brought his characteristic activist style to the podium -- new initiatives and a call to action on all fronts -- to the long, Gaullist tradition of keeping France a player on the world stage. He emphasized the importance of the U.S.-France alliance for the future -- leadership in the global era -- rather than a duly remembered shared history. "U.S.-France friendship is more important now than ever before," Sarkozy said. Yet "because this friendship is a given, we are free to speak frankly" and "without taboos" when there are disagreements.

CRITICIZES IRAQ INVASION AND "UNILATERAL RECOURSE TO FORCE"

PARIS 00003579 002.2 OF 006

¶6. (SBU) Sarkozy directly took the U.S. to task in regard to Iraq. Sarkozy said, "in connection with international crises such as that of Iraq, it is clear today that unilateral recourse to force leads to failure." When speaking specifically to what he called the Iraq dimension of the fusion of crises in the Greater Middle East (the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Lebanon and Iran are other three elements), Sarkozy underlined that France recognized the threat to its interests of the destabilizing consequences of "civil war" in Iraq and was ready to do its part to end the conflict. Sarkozy called for a "political solution," adding that it required a "definite horizon for the withdrawal of foreign troops," because only then would "the actors fully face up to the consequences of their actions." Sarkozy called an Iranian military nuclear capability "unacceptable," and termed "the catastrophic choice between an Iranian bomb and bombing Iran," "without a doubt the most serious crisis that faces the international community."

THE FOUR CRISES IN THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST

¶7. (SBU) Sarkozy asserted that the situation in the Middle East has clearly worsened over the past five years as the region's separate crises, though "very different" have tended "every day to become more inter-linked." He ran through the region's main issues for France as follows:

--Middle East peace process: Despite the lack of headway, Sarkozy stated that the solution was well-known: Israel

and Palestine should coexist peacefully as two states with established and recognized borders. Sarkozy unabashedly avowed his reputation as a friend of Israel and proclaimed his adamant refusal to compromise on Israel's security. Since his election, he had been visited in Paris by numerous Arab leaders, to whom he had conveyed his sincere friendship and respect. France was ready to play a role, he said, but direct Israeli-Palestinian talks were the sole starting point toward lasting peace. The Quartet and moderate Arab states should support the Palestinian authority, as represented by president Mahmoud Abbas. Relaunching a true dynamic of peace was imperative, Sarkozy warned, lest the establishment of "Hamastan" in the Gaza Strip prove the harbinger of the advent of radical Islamic control in the Palestinian territories.

--Lebanon/Syria: Sarkozy recalled France's long-standing ties to Lebanon and asserted a "passionate" commitment to Lebanese liberty, independence and sovereignty as demanded in UNSCRs 1559 and 1701. Sarkozy linked FM Kouchner's initiative to convene Lebanese parties for talks with efforts to resolve the crisis by scheduling elections in accordance with the Lebanese constitution, stipulating that the next president should be able to work with all Lebanese communities. Sarkozy called for Syria to support the approach, adding that constructive action by Damascus would permit renewed Franco-Syrian dialog.

--Iraq: Sarkozy underlined the continuity of policy between Chirac and himself in opposing "this war." Being right about the conflict, however, did not absolve France from dealing with the consequences, which included a merciless civil war, entrenched terrorist groupings, and global economic fragility due to oil production. Iraq required a political solution, one involving the marginalization of extremists, a process of true national reconciliation, and guaranteed access to resources and institutions for all Iraqis. Headway furthermore required the definition of "a clear horizon concerning the withdrawal of foreign troops" in order to push all actors -- Iraqi, regional and even international -- toward useful action. France stood ready to play its part, a message that FM Kouchner had delivered in his visit to Baghdad.

--Iran: Sarkozy recalled France's determination, together with Germany and the UK, to work in concert with the U.S., Russia and China to prevent Iranian development of nuclear weapons. An Iran in possession of nuclear arms is "unacceptable for me," he emphasized. While he underlined French support for a process of stepped-up sanctions, he also stated his willingness to engage with an Iran that respected its obligations. Sarkozy declared bluntly that the alternatives to an international diplomatic approach were "catastrophic" -- either an Iranian bomb or the bombing of Iran itself. He took heart however in the

PARIS 00003579 003.2 OF 006

headway, albeit slow, with the DPRK through the Six Party Talks, as well as in the Libyan abandonment of WMD programs. France would spare no effort, Sarkozy said, to convince Iran of the benefits of serious international negotiations.

A MEDITERRANEAN UNION TO PREEMPT A CLASH WITH ISLAM

19. (SBU) Sarkozy offered his vision of a Mediterranean Union as a centerpiece of the effort to stave off confrontation between Islam and the West. A Mediterranean Union would involve concrete cooperation between European states and the Maghreb in four distinct spheres: i) the environment and sustainable development; ii) cultural dialogue; iii) economic growth/social development; and, iv) Mediterranean security. Sarkozy claimed his Mediterranean initiative would be compatible with other extant approaches, chiefly the Barcelona Process, "5+5",

and the Mediterranean Forum. Informal dialogue was already underway, he suggested, including with Libya, a country he hoped would quickly rejoin the international community, now that the case of the Bulgarian nurses had been resolved. He announced planning for a formal meeting of heads of state in early 2008.

A FRENCH PRESIDENT WHO EMBRACES NATO

¶10. (SBU) Sarkozy spoke about NATO in advocacy terms, rare for a French president, calling NATO "ours -- we founded it, we are one of its principal contributors." Noting that France's security requires both NATO and a Europe Union defense policy, he hammered home that "opposing the EU and NATO makes no sense" since "the two are complimentary." Sarkozy called for the simultaneous strengthening of European Defense and the renewal of NATO. Without providing specifics, he said that "France will put forward proposals for the renovation of NATO." Sarkozy pointed to the structuring of the international force in Afghanistan as a model of NATO-EU synergy. Kosovo, he said, provided another illustration of complementarity among the EU, NATO, and the UN. Later in the speech, after addressing the threat of international terrorism (using the phrase "the threat of criminal attacks" and not "terrorism" per se), Sarkozy pledged to bolster the presence of French trainers working with the Afghan military, since "it has to take the lead in waging and winning the war against the Taliban." He also pledged that France would augment its reconstruction assistance in Afghanistan. He voiced apprehension however that the campaign in Afghanistan could prove futile if Al Qaeda and Taliban elements continued to find refuge across the Pakistan border.

THREE OVER-ARCHING CHALLENGES

¶11. (SBU) Sarkozy organized his overview of France's projected role in the world in light of three challenges: i) "preventing a confrontation between Islam and the West"; ii) "integrating the emerging giants, China, India and Brazil"; and, iii) "managing the first-ever, planetary challenges of climate change, sustainable energy consumption and pandemics." Sarkozy placed Europe -- and through Europe, France -- at the center of international action on the specific issues linking these broad challenges. The speech included a range of steps that France would be taking or advocating -- a commission on "Europe in 2020 - 2030;" a call to widen the G-8 to include the new giants, eventually evolving into a "G-13"; a summit of Mediterranean heads of state in early 2008 to advance the notion of a Mediterranean Union; a meeting of the UN Security Council on peace and security in Africa on September 25, which Sarkozy mentioned in the context of Darfur. The French president underlined the need for international engagement on climate change. He was sharply critical of the U.S. in this regard, saying that "unfortunately, in regard to protection of the environment, the U.S. doesn't show the leadership it claims for itself."

PROMISES A STRONG, AND RELEVANT, EUROPE

¶12. (SBU) "The construction of Europe will remain the absolute priority of our foreign policy" -- so begins the main body of the speech, in which Sarkozy tackles the main lines of direction of his foreign policy. He projected France as the driving force of Europe, saying that "without

PARIS 00003579 004.2 OF 006

Europe France can't be strong, and without France Europe can't be strong." He affirmed that Europe, because it had learned "through the long process of its construction," how to share sovereignty, brought "practical experience" to the interdependent world scene that "fits well with the demands

of our times." In previewing the French EU presidency for the second half of 2008, Sarkozy promised that he, or the Prime Minister, would visit by July 1, 2008 in order to listen to their priorities, as well as to propose those of France, namely in the areas of immigration, energy and the environment.

TURKEY AND THE EU: SARKOZY LEAVES THE DOOR AJAR

¶13. (SBU) Sarkozy struck a more conciliatory tone regarding EU dialog with Turkey on EU membership, suggesting France would set aside objections to opening those new chapters for negotiation between the EU and Turkey, compatible with the alternatives of either full membership or a close linkage that stopped of full membership. He conditioned his willingness on the creation, by the end of 2007, of a committee of 10 to 12 "wise men" which would reflect on the European project and present their conclusions and propositions before the European parliamentary elections in June 2009. Sarkozy nonetheless made clear his support for the second option, predicting with confidence that his view would gain traction over time.

Russia and China: Hard-nosed Descriptions

¶14. (SBU) Sarkozy offered blunt thumbnail assessments of contemporary Russia and China. He sketched a Russia making an assertive return to the world stage by "brutally" wielding trump cards of oil and gas reserves, at a time when Europe had hoped for more positive and significant contributions. China, while continuing an impressive and historic transformation, evinced an insatiable need for raw materials that translated into strategies of control, notably in Africa, Sarkozy judged.

Africa: Poised for Success

¶15. (SBU) Sarkozy continued his public effort to recast perceptions of the French relationship to Africa. Africa remained an "essential priority" in French policy and a key front for the EU. Africa, however, was not the "sick man of today's world." Africa did not need charity, he said, and its 5 percent average economic growth would grow further if staple products, such as cotton, were properly valued. Africa was poised to succeed in a globalized world, yet too often remained marginalized, prone to exploitation, suffering from climatic changes, and unable to draw the full benefit of vast natural resources. At the midpoint to the Millennium Development Goals, there was a need to redouble international commitment, yet this was not just a matter of monetary contributions, which Sarkozy noted in an allusion to 2008 budgetary stresses in France. There was a need for better results, more efficiency, and constant management.

African Security Challenges and the Tragedy of Darfur

¶16. (U) Development depended on security, as well, and Sarkozy offered a nod to headway in resolving conflicts in the Great Lakes and West Africa. Yet Darfur was a clear-cut tragedy and the suffering of its people required a response. France must play a part, and Sarkozy took comfort in the June 25 Darfur Ministerial in Paris and in the UNSCR 1769 authorizing UNAMID, the UN-AU Hybrid Force. To further mobilize international efforts to overcome challenges to peace and security in Africa, Sarkozy announced he would chair a September 25 UNSC meeting of heads of states.

Premonitions of a Budgetary Battle?

¶17. (SBU) Sarkozy concluded his address by stating the MFA would need the means by which to fulfill its mission as

well as interministerial recognition of its role at the heart of national policy in order that France could succeed in an age of globalization. To that end, Sarkozy, together with the Prime Minister, was requesting the preparation of a "White Paper," that Sarkozy would study in connection

PARIS 00003579 005.2 OF 006

with a report forthcoming from former FM Hubert Vedrine. Sarkozy expressed confidence in the ability of FM Kouchner and the MFA to implement reforms. (Comment: Sarkozy mentioned no specific reforms, but FM Kouchner's address to the Ambassadorial Conference later in the day called for a reorganization of diplomatic representation, with a more regional focus and realignment of resources that Kouchner referred to as "diplomacy in motion". Kouchner also called for greater transparency in ambassadorial appointments. Ref B).

INITIAL MEDIA REACTION

¶18. (U) Leading center-left daily Le Monde -- which hit the newsstands in the afternoon on August 27, the same day as Sarkozy's address -- led off media reaction to the speech under the headline "Nicolas Sarkozy: An Iran endowed with nuclear arms is unacceptable." The article contrasted Sarkozy's more Atlanticist tone, as well as a more critical attitude towards Russia and China, with Chirac. The Le Monde reaction also noted that Sarkozy explicitly invoked a withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, and used the word "war" more than Kouchner did in conjunction with his recent visit. The paper noted that Sarkozy's position seemed to have softened slightly with regard to Turkey (and the European Union). It also observed that Sarkozy showed a break from Chirac on NATO -- calling for focused attention to NATO, and France's relationship to it, rather than simply mistrust. In Le Monde's view, Sarkozy no longer looked skeptically at international engagement in Afghanistan, in contrast to his opinions during the presidential campaign. Le Monde also noted several areas where Sarkozy echoed concerns of President Chirac: preventing a "conflict between Islam and the West," climate change, new pandemics.

¶19. (U) All major French newspapers on August 28 highlighted Sarkozy's address (see Aug. 28 Paris Point special edition). The lead story in Le Figaro ran under the headline "Sarkozy for an activist foreign policy" with the boxed quote "QA stronger France at home is conditioned on its influence overseas.Q" Le Figaro also ran an editorial, "Diplomacy: Rupture and Continuity," which concludes that Sarkozy's foreign policy differs dramatically from Chirac's in tone and substance. Liberation, headlined "A Diplomacy of Firmness," and highlighted Sarkozy's emphasis on the European Union as the "first priority" for French foreign policy. It also published an interview with think-tanker Francois Heisbourg who views Sarkozy's line on Iran as firmer and more determined than that of his predecessor. Les Echos, a highly respected business daily, focused on Sarkozy's emphasis on European cooperation. Whereas domestic media concentrated mostly on the broader outline of foreign policy, international coverage tended to focus on specific crisis issues, in particular, Iran.

¶20. (U) AP coverage included a report titled "Sarkozy boosting French force in Afghanistan" and an analysis titled "Sarkozy vs. Chirac: Tougher on Russia, friendlier to Israel, United States." AFP stories included "Sarkozy pleads before ambassadors for an increased role for France on the world scene" and "Sarkozy promises 'very strong initiatives' for European defense policy." The Guardian (UK) headline read "From Iran to US, Sarkozy speech signals French diplomatic shift," while the Daily Telegraph telegraphed "Nicolas Sarkozy warns of Iran's Nuclear

Crisis." The International Herald Tribune featured "Tehran risks attack over atomic push, Paris warns," which included quotes from Heisbourg. The NY Times carried the same Elaine Sciolino story, under the headline "French Leader Raises Possibility of Force in Iran," while the Washington Post took an opposite tack, with "Sarkozy Says Military Confrontation in Iran Would be 'Catastrophic,' Urges Diplomacy."

¶21. (U) Electronic media also focused on Sarkozy's address, reporting that, while mentioning France's friendly ties with the United States, Sarkozy sent a message to the U.S. by making clear that the "Iraqis need a clear timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops." (Former PM Villepin, commenting the evening of August 27 on a leading television channel, said that it was fine to dispatch FM Kouchner to Iraq, but France needed to maintain its call for a definite timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.) TV channels TF1 and France 2 highlighted Sarkozy's tough language on

PARIS 00003579 006.2 OF 006

Iran, warnings to China and Russia, and his putative softening on Turkey's relationship with the EU. France 2 also noted Sarkozy's emphasis on the need to prevent "a confrontation between Islam and the West," while TF1 focused on Sarkozy's issuance of "marching orders" to the French ambassadors. As for radio coverage, Europe 1's senior commentator called Sarkozy's foreign policy "ambitious and courageous," while RTL's called Sarkozy's language on Iran "blunt."

ENGLISH TEXT OF SPEECH

¶22. (U) Sarkozy's speech, as prepared for delivery, translated into English, is available at
http://opensource.dni.sgov.gov/cgi-bin/cqcgi/@rware.env?CQ_CUR_DOCUMENT=1&CQ_USER_NAME=x&CQ_PASSWORD=h&CQ_LOGIN=Y&CQ_DO_QUERY=Y&CQ_DTF_ORIG_DOC_TEXT=Y&CQ_QUERY_STRING.DOCUMENT_ID=EUP20070827319001&CQ_CUR_LIBRARY=ALL&TrackDocID=EUP20070827319001
(Note: Sarkozy's speech as delivered, differed in some significant respects from this text; it is the authoritative text but a transcript is not yet available.)

Please visit Paris' Classified Website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.cfm>

PEKALA